

Irene Brown - Childminding Service

Child Minding

Dunfermline

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
13 January 2026

Service provided by:
Irene Brown

Service provider number:
SP2014985744

Service no:
CS2014324266

About the service

Irene Brown provides a childminding service from their property in a quiet residential area of Dunfermline. The childminder is registered to provide a care service for a maximum of seven children up to 16 years of age. Numbers are inclusive of the childminder's own children.

The service is close to local primary schools, shops, parks and other amenities. The children are cared for downstairs and make use of the playroom, kitchen, living room and toilet. Children also have access to an enclosed garden which is accessible from the playroom.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 13 January 2026 between 13:05 and 16:10. The inspection was carried out by one inspector from the Care Inspectorate. To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included previous inspection findings, registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection. In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with two children using the service
- spoke with one family
- received questionnaire feedback from four families
- spoke with the childminder
- observed practice and children's experiences
- reviewed documents.

As part of our inspections, we assess core assurances. Core assurances are checks we make to ensure children are safe, the physical environment is well maintained and that a service is operating legally. At the time of this inspection, no improvements were identified relating to core assurances.

Key messages

- A continuous culture of improvement had been embraced and the childminder created conditions where children experienced high quality care, play and learning.
- Children were actively involved in leading their own play and learning. They were happy, engaged and having fun.
- Children's development was well supported by the childminder through high quality interactions.
- Children experienced warm, kind and caring interactions. They were offered comforting, responsive care which supported their wellbeing.
- Strong connections had been established with families. They experienced a warm and welcoming environment.

From this inspection we evaluated this service as:

In evaluating quality, we use a six point scale where 1 is unsatisfactory and 6 is excellent

Leadership	5 - Very Good
Children play and learn	5 - Very Good
Children are supported to achieve	5 - Very Good

Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

Leadership 5 - Very Good

We found major strengths in this aspect of the setting's work and identified very few areas for improvement; therefore, we evaluated this quality indicator as very good.

Leadership and management of staff and resources

The vision, values and aims were embedded in the everyday life of the service and informed practice. The childminder identified there was scope for children and families to be involved in reviewing the current vision, values and aims to ensure their views were reflected.

Effective use of self-evaluation supported the childminder to identify strengths and areas for development and as a result, they tailored the service to meet the needs of children. For example, the childminder had identified introducing sign language would further support children's communication skills. Families had opportunities to share feedback and their suggestions helped to inform and sustain changes leading to positive outcomes for children. One family told us, "Irene has involved us in several discussions about incorporating more sign language into the daily routines; she has asked how we use signs to help communication at home, how our child uses them and what signs would be useful for our child at their current developmental stage."

A continuous culture of improvement had been embraced. The childminder was very reflective and used best practice guidance effectively to support meaningful changes. A clear and detailed improvement plan had been developed and was being effectively implemented. As a result, the childminder created conditions where children experienced high quality care, play and learning.

Children play and learn 5 - Very Good

We found major strengths in this aspect of the setting's work and identified very few areas for improvement; therefore, we evaluated this quality indicator as very good.

Playing, learning and developing

Children were actively involved in leading their own play and learning and as a result, they were happy, engaged and having fun. They were able to make choices about their play from resources which were easily accessible and relevant to their interests. For example, they enjoyed using loose parts in imaginative play and listening to their favourite stories using digital technology. Peer interaction was encouraged by the childminder and children experienced fun and laughter as they played together. As a result, they were supported to develop their social skills through playful experiences.

Children's development was very well supported by the childminder through high quality interactions. This included using concepts such as commenting and explaining to extend children's language and vocabulary and the introduction of sign language to support their communication. The childminder had a strong understanding about how children develop and learn. They were very knowledgeable about children's individual interests, development and patterns of play and used this to support and extend their learning. This meant children were able to make progress at their own pace.

A key strength of the service, highlighted by families, was the variety of play experiences offered in the local community. Children benefited from opportunities such as music and movement sessions, visits to the beach, forest and community garden. These experiences provided opportunities for exploration, physical activity, and connection with nature and supported children's learning and overall wellbeing.

Observations of children's progress and achievements were of a high quality. These were shared with families which supported them to feel included. Families were positive about their involvement. They told us, "We regularly discuss our child's development, milestones and goals with Irene, and she is quick to let us know if our child attempts or achieves a new skill" and "We would often have chats about my child's progression and we would often have a look at their personal learning journey."

Children are supported to achieve 5 - Very Good

We found major strengths in this aspect of the setting's work and identified very few areas for improvement; therefore, we evaluated this quality indicator as very good.

Nurturing care and support

Children experienced warm, kind and caring interactions. They were offered comforting, responsive care which supported their wellbeing. Children were supported to socialise and play together which impacted positively on regulating their emotions and building social skills. As a result, children were happy and relaxed. Families were very happy with the care their children received. They told us the childminder was, "unbelievably kind and caring", "very cheerful" and "always ensures the kids are happy and having fun".

Personal plans were in place and reflected children's current needs. The childminder knew children very well and effectively used the information to support and meet their needs. Children's individual routines were well planned for which created a sense of safety and security. The childminder had reflected on the transitions throughout the day to ensure children were able to sleep or rest at a time that was right for them. Transitions into the setting were well considered and tailored to children and families individual needs and wishes. One family told us, "Prior to our child starting, [the childminder] kept in touch regularly to see how we were doing and made the effort to get to know us as a family."

Strong connections had been established with families. They experienced a warm and welcoming environment. Children's daily experiences were shared with families which helped them to feel included. Families told us, "I love hearing about what my child is up to on the app as it puts my mind at ease" and "Great communicator and always keeps us updated with our child's care."

Children's food choices were nutritious and healthy in line with current guidance. The childminder took account of children's specific dietary needs and thoughtfully considered how to ensure meals were inclusive for all children.

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at www.careinspectorate.com.

Detailed evaluations

Leadership	5 - Very Good
Leadership and management of staff and resources	5 - Very Good
Children play and learn	5 - Very Good
Playing, learning and developing	5 - Very Good
Children are supported to achieve	5 - Very Good
Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good

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Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
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